March 23, 1971 D. LEHRMAN 3,572,260

GARMENT DRYING APPARATUS

Filed Jan. 14, 1969 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

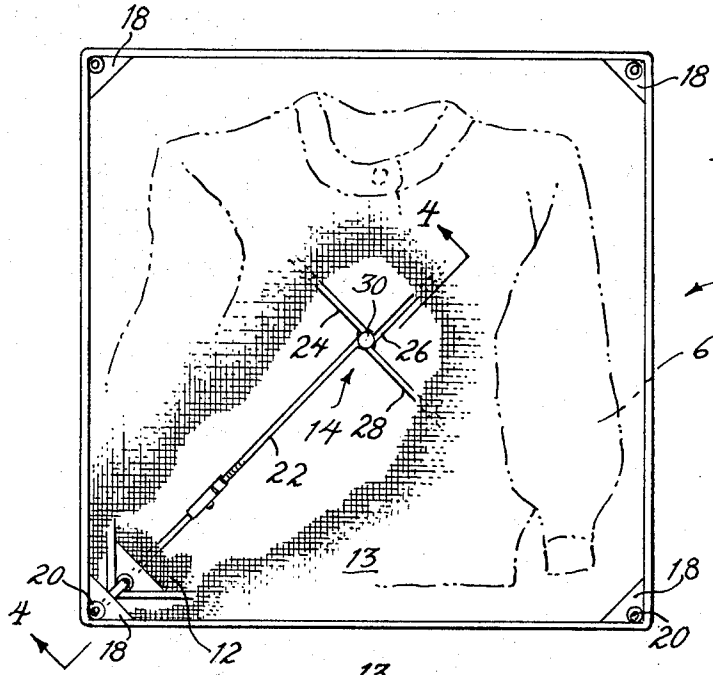


Fig. 1.

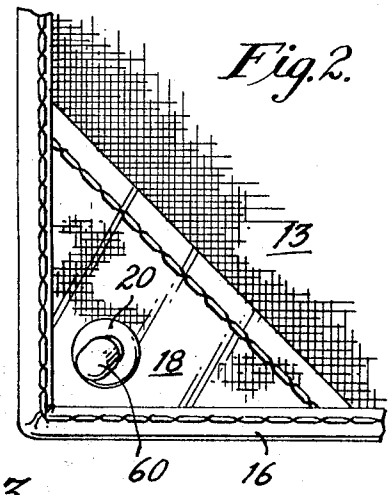


Fig. 2.

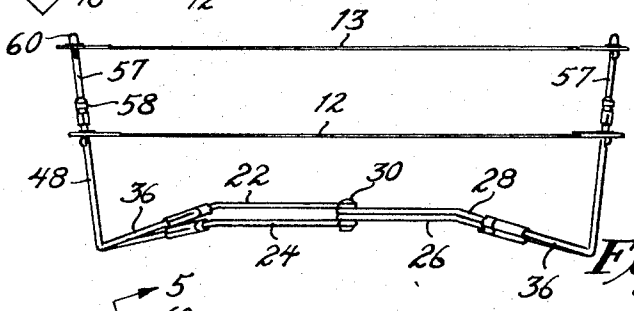


Fig. 3.

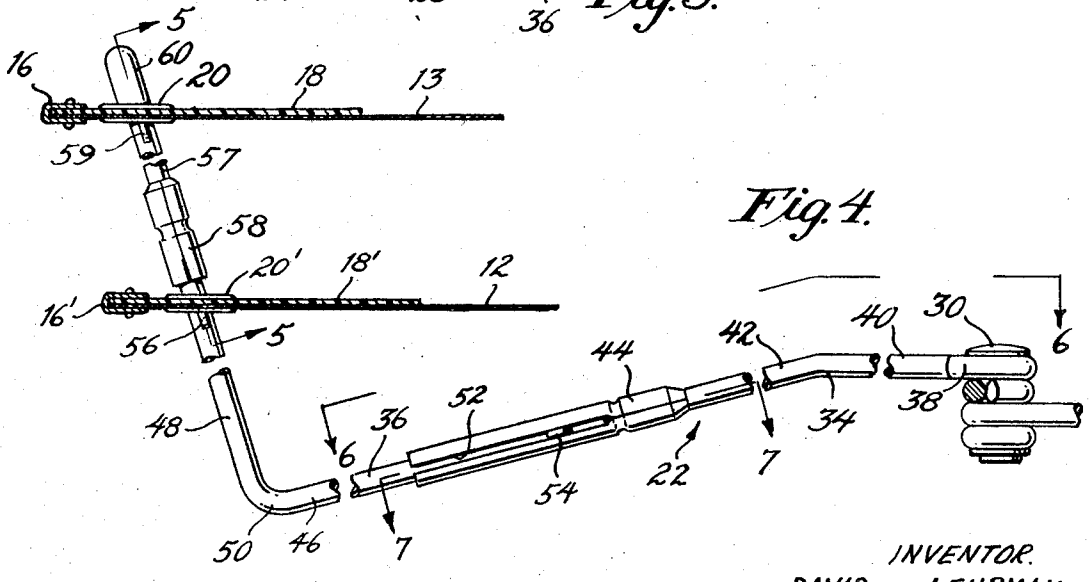


Fig. 4.

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GARMENT DRYING APPARATUS

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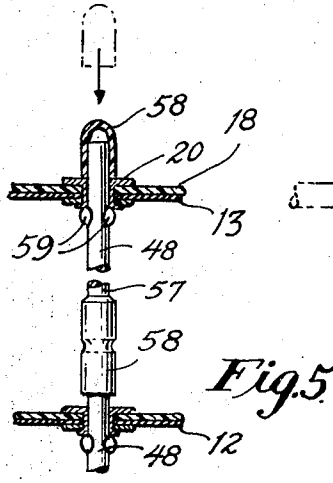


Fig. 5

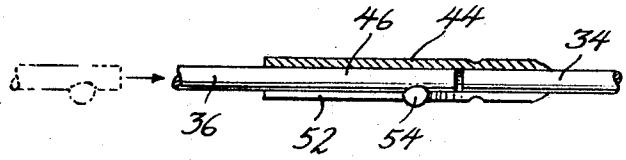


Fig. 7

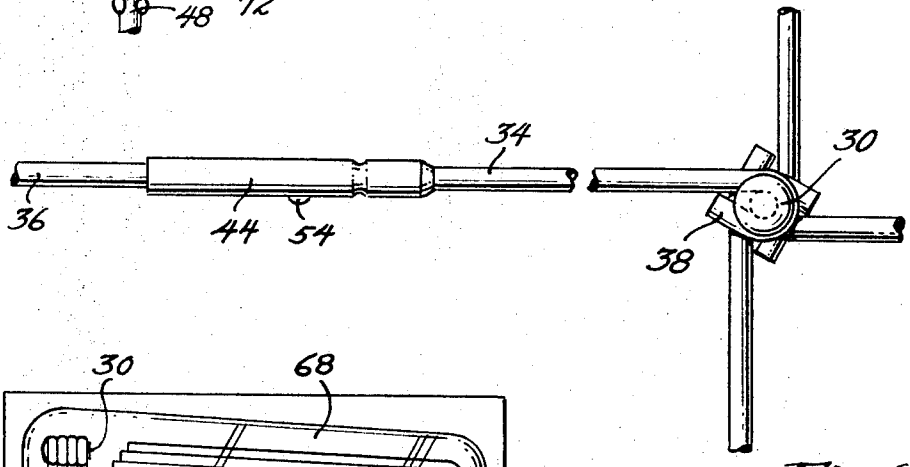


Fig. 6

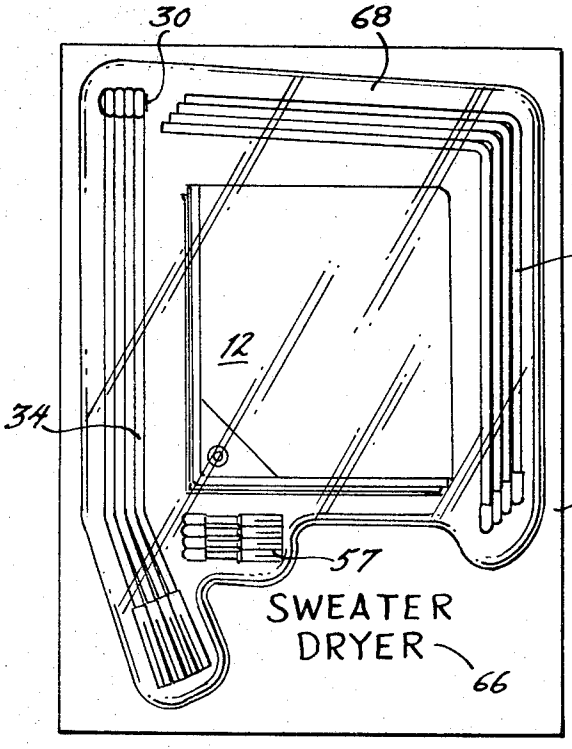


Fig. 8

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GARMENT DRYING APPARATUS

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U.S. Cl. 108—24 12 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Garment drying apparatus is provided, comprising collapsible hingedly interconnected support arms, and a flexible, foraminous garment supporting member, coupled to distal upper ends of the support arms. In one form of the apparatus, a pair of foraminous members are provided, coupled to the support arms in spaced relation to facilitate simultaneous drying of more than one garment.

This invention relates to garment drying apparatus, and more particularly, to drying apparatus suitable for drying and blocking garments such as sweaters or the like.

It has been proposed to dry garments such as sweaters or the like by placing them on a mesh fabric screen, spaced from a support surface. With such an arrangement, there can be circulation of air beneath the garment, thereby accelerating the drying process. Such an arrangement is disclosed in Pat. 3,307,712, wherein a fabric screen is supported by crossed, bowed resilient strips, riveted together at their medial portions.

A notable shortcoming of known prior art apparatus of the sort shown in Pat. 3,307,712 has been general unwieldiness due to the necessarily large dimensions of the strips.

The present invention avoids this shortcoming by providing a novel arrangement of foldable and collapsible support arms, capable of being placed in a small package when disassembled. Moreover, the present invention provides for simultaneous drying of more than one garment, thereby providing a garment apparatus of greatly increased utility.

In view of the foregoing, it is one object of this invention to provide a novel collapsible garment drying apparatus.

It is another object to provide a collapsible drying apparatus suitable for drying sweaters or the like.

It is still another object of this invention to provide a collapsible garment drying apparatus wherein a flexible, foraminous garment supporting member is itself supported by rigid support arms, the rigid support arms being capable of disassembly to facilitate packaging and storage.

It is yet another object of this invention to provide garment drying apparatus having support arms, the support arms including quick-disconnect joints to facilitate disassembly, storage or packaging.

It is another object to provide a novel garment drying apparatus wherein one or more garments can be dried at a given time.

Other objects will appear hereinafter.

The foregoing and other objects are realized by a form of the invention comprising a plurality of support arms and a flexible, foraminous garment supporting member adapted to be received on and supported by the support arms, and wherein the support arms are hingedly interconnected, and include generally horizontally extending and generally upwardly extending portions. In such form of the invention, the support arms include quick-disconnect couplings, whereby the support arms may be quickly disassembled for packaging or storage.

Also, in the preferred form of the invention, the support arms are adapted to receive and support a second foraminous garment supporting member spaced from the first, so that one or more garments may be dried at a given time.

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of the apparatus, partially broken away for clarity.

FIG. 2 is a detail view of a corner of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a side elevation view of the apparatus.

FIG. 4 is a detail view taken along the line 4—4 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a detail view taken along the line 5—5 in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a detail view taken along the line 6—6 in FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a detail view taken along the line 7—7 in FIG. 4.

FIG. 8 is a view of a representative package containing the apparatus.

Referring now to the drawings in detail, wherein like numerals indicate like elements, there is seen in FIG. 1 a garment drying apparatus designated generally by the reference numeral **10**.

The apparatus **10** includes flexible, foraminous garment supporting members **12** and **13**, and a support frame, designated generally by the reference numeral **14**, for the garment supporting members **12** and **13**.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, the garment supporting member **13**, whose construction is typical, is of open mesh material. In one operative form of the invention, the garment support member **13** is made of nylon marquisette. A suitable hem **16** may be provided about the periphery of the garment supporting member **13**. Also, corners of the garment supporting member **13** may be provided with reinforcing gussets **18**. In one form of the invention, the reinforcing gussets **18** were of celluloid. The gussets **18** provide secured anchorage for eyelets **20**. The construction of garments supporting member **12** is similar to that of the member **13**. Thus, the garment supporting member **12** includes gussets **18'** and eyelets **20'**.

Referring now to FIGS. 3, 4 and 6, the support frame **14** in the illustrated embodiment includes support arms **22, 24, 26** and **28**. The support arms **22–28** are each rotatably coupled to rivet **30**.

The support arm **22**, as seen in FIG. 4, will now be described in detail, it being understood that the remaining support arms **24–28** are identical to it.

The support arm **22** is made in two main sections, which for convenience, may be referred to as an inner section **34** and an outer section **36**. The inner section **34** includes bight element **38** adjacent the rivet **30**; a stub portion **40** extending radially outwardly from the axis of the rivet **30** and an extension portion **42** forming an extension of the stub portion **40**. The extension portion **42** is angled slightly downwardly from the horizontal, but extends nevertheless in a generally horizontal direction. A socket member **44** is coupled to the end of the extension portion **42**. Any convenient means may be used to couple the socket member **44** to the extension portion **42**. For example, the socket member **44** may be crimped to the extension portion **42**. The socket member **44** provides a releasable coupling means for coupling the inner and outer sections **34** and **36**. Other equivalent means can of course be used.

The outer section **36** includes a shank portion **46** extending parallel to the extension portion **42**, and an upwardly extending distal portion **48**. The bend **50** defining the intersection between the shank portion **46** and the distal portion **48** preferably defines the lowest point on

the support arm 22. Thus, when placed on a supporting surface, the support frame 14 rests on the bend 50.

Alignment means are provided to insure proper alignment of the inner and outer section 34 and 36. Referring to FIGS. 4, 6 and 7, the above-mentioned socket member 44 may be provided in one of its sides with a slot 52. A tab 54 on the shank portion 46 of outer section 36 is receivable in the slot 52. It is apparent from FIG. 7 that tab 54 may be formed of material upset from the shank portion 46. The location of the slot 52 and tab 54 ensures assembly of the inner section 34 and outer section 36 in proper relation, and in fact, precludes assembly in any other fashion. Alignment means other than the precise means illustrated may of course be used.

Tabs 56 may be formed on opposite sides of distal portion 48 adjacent its upper end. Tabs 56 may be upset from the material of distal portion 48.

The outer section 36, in the presently preferred form of the invention, is itself made in two sections. Thus, a tip portion 57, including a socket member 58, may be secured to the upper end of distal portion 48. The tip portion 57 may be provided with tabs 59, similar to the tabs 56, adjacent its upper end.

The manner in which the apparatus 10 may be deployed for use should now be apparent. Thus, referring to FIG. 1, respective inner sections 34 of support arms 22–28 may be deployed to a cruciform configuration. Respective outer sections 36 may be inserted into the socket members 44.

Referring to FIGS. 4 and 5, the eyelets 20′ of garment supporting member 12 may be passed over the upturned ends of respective distal portions 48. The tabs 56, it should be understood, engage and support the eyelets 20′. Socket members 58 of tip portions 57 can then be placed over the upper ends of the distal portions 48 to retain the eyelets 20′. Next, the eyelets 20 of garment supporting member 13 may be passed over the upturned ends of tip portions 57. The tabs 59 engage and support the eyelets 20. Finally, resilient plastic retaining caps 60 may be passed over upper ends of the tip portions 57 to retain the respective eyelets 20 in place. If desired, the garment supporting member 12 may be used alone, in which case the retaining caps 60 are placed over the ends of the distal portions 48. Also, if desired, the tip portions 57 may be used to retain garment supporting member 13, and garment supporting member 12 not used.

A sweater 61 or other garment, seen in phantom in FIG. 1, may be placed on the garment supporting member 13. A second garment may be placed on the garment supporting member 12. The garments may be blocked to a desired shape when placed on the supporting members 12 and 13, thus preventing damage due to excessive or uneven shrinkage.

Referring now to FIG. 8, the unique compactness provided by the present apparatus 10 is readily apparent. Thus, there is seen in FIG. 8 a representative package, designated generally by the reference numeral 62, containing the apparatus 10 in disassembled condition.

The package 62 includes a card 64. The card 64 may be of conventional materials, such as cardboard, chipboard, or the like. The card 64 may bear identifying indicia or descriptive material 66. A transparent plastic polymeric "blister" 68 is shown applied to the card 64, and fully encloses the various components of the apparatus 10. Thus, the support arms 26–28 have been disassembled. The outer sections of the support arms, including the outer section 36, are in nested relation. The inner sections, including the inner section 34, are rotated about the rivet 30 in generally coplanar relation. Tip portions 57 are in closely spaced relation. The garment supporting members 12 and 13 are retained beneath the blister 68 in folded condition.

Packages other than the representative package 62 may of course be used to package the garment drying apparatus 10. It is apparent, however, that the package, of whatever sort, need not be large in size. For example, for one apparatus 10 providing a garment supporting member 12 two feet square, that is, with a diagonal dimension of approximately thirty-five inches, a card 64 having dimensions of 11⅜ inches by 7 5/16 inches was adequate. In the apparatus 10 thus packaged, the inner section 34 with its associated socket member 44 had a length of approximately eleven inches.

Thus, the utility of the present apparatus 10 is greatly enhanced by virtue of its exceedingly compact stored or packaged dimensions, as compared to the large drying surface provided by the garment supporting members 12, 13 when the apparatus 10 is in its operative position. The apparatus 10 is particularly well suited for travel and other uses where portability is of prime importance.

The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential attributes thereof and, accordingly, reference should be made to the appended claims, rather than to the foregoing specification as indicating the scope of the invention.

It is claimed:

1. Garment drying apparatus comprising a support frame having a plurality of support arms, said support arms comprising hingedly interconnected generally horizontally extending inner sections, and outer sections having upwardly extending portions, means for releasably coupling said inner sections to said outer sections, at least one flexible foraminous garment supporting member adapted to be received on and supported by said upwardly extending portions, and means on said upwardly extending portions for retaining said garment support member on said upwardly extending portions.

2. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim 1 wherein said inner sections include downwardly extending portions, and said outer sections include downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions, portions of said outer sections between their downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions defining rest means for said support frame.

3. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim 1 wherein said means for releasably coupling said inner sections to said outer sections comprise a socket member on one of said sections, said socket member having alignment means thereon, and alignment means on the other of said sections complemental with said first-mentioned alignment means for maintaining said inner and outer sections in operative relation.

4. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim 3 wherein said alignment means comprises a slot extending longitudinally of said socket member, and a tab on the other of said sections complemental with said slot.

5. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim 3 wherein said inner sections include downwardly extending portions, and said outer sections include downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions, portions of said outer sections between their downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions defining rest means for said support frame.

6. Garment drying apparatus comprising a support frame having a plurality of support arms, said support arms comprising hingedly interconnected generally horizontally extending inner sections, and outer sections having upwardly extending portions, means for releasably coupling said inner sections to said outer sections, at least one flexible foraminous garment support member coupled to and supported by said upwardly extending portions, and means on said upwardly extending portions to retain said garment supporting member on said upwardly extending portions.

7. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim 6 wherein said inner sections include downwardly extending portions and said outer sections include downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions, portions of said outer sections between their downwardly

extending portions and said upwardly extending portions defining rest means for said support frame.

8. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim **6** wherein said means for releasably coupling said inner sections to said outer sections comprises a socket member on one of said sections, said socket member having alignment means thereon, and alignment means on the other of said sections complemental with said first-mentioned alignment means whereby said inner and outer sections are maintained in operative relation.

9. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim **8** wherein said alignment means comprises a slot extending longitudinally of said socket member and a tab on the other of said sections complemental with slot.

10. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim **8**, wherein said inner sections include downwardly extending portions, and said outer sections include downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions, portions of said outer sections between their downwardly extending portions and said upwardly extending portions defining rest means for said support frame.

11. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim **1**, and a pair of garment support members, one of said garment supporting members adapted to be received on and supported adjacent upper ends of said upwardly extending portions, said means for retaining said garment supporting member comprising tip portions adapted to be coupled to the upper ends of said upwardly extending portions, upper ends of said tip portions being adapted to receive and support the other of said pair of garment supporting members, and means on said tip portions for

retaining the other of said pair of garment supporting members thereon.

12. Garment drying apparatus in accordance with claim **6**, and a pair of garment support members, one of said garment supporting members adapted to be received on and supported adjacent upper ends of said upwardly extending portions, said means for retaining said garment supporting member comprising tip portions adapted to be coupled to the upper ends of said upwardly extending portions, upper ends of said tip portions being adapted to receive and support the other of said pair of garment supporting members, and means on said tip portions for retaining the other of said pair of garment supporting members thereon.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

233—69; 248—165; 211—178